

# Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer (Sanders Spiritual Growth Series)

Sanders, J. Oswald

---

## 1. An Honorable Ambition

### Page 11 · Location 136

An Honorable Ambition

### Page 11 · Location 137

To aspire to leadership is an honorable ambition. 1 TIMOTHY 3: 1

### Page 12 · Location 152

Rewards for the work of leading the church were hardship, contempt, rejection, and even death. The leader was first to draw fire in persecution, first in line to suffer.

### Page 12 · Location 158

In many troubled areas today, spiritual leadership is no task for those who seek stable benefits and upscale working conditions.

### Page 13 · Location 165

Jeremiah was not condemning all ambition as sinful, but he was pointing to selfish motivation that makes ambition wrong i.e. “great things for yourself.”

### Page 13 · Location 167

Our Lord never taught against the urge to high achievement, but He did expose and condemn unworthy motivation.

### Page 13 · Location 172

Ambition which centers on the glory of God and welfare of the church is a mighty force for good.

### Page 14 · Location 175

Ambitious people, in this sense, enjoy the power that comes with money, prestige, and authority. Jesus had no time for such ego-driven ambitions. The true spiritual leader will never “campaign for promotion.”

**Page 14 · Location 180**

True greatness, true leadership, is found in giving yourself in service to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you. True service is never without cost. Often it comes with a bitter cup of challenges and a painful baptism of suffering.

**Page 14 · Location 186**

“The final estimate of men shows that history cares not an iota for the rank or title a man has borne, or the office he has held, but only the quality of his deeds and the character of his mind and heart.” 2

**2. The Search for Leaders****Page 17 · Location 206**

The Search for Leaders

**Page 17 · Location 207**

No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another. PSALM 75: 6–7

**Page 18 · Location 220**

To be a leader in the church has always required strength and faith beyond the merely average.

**Page 18 · Location 225**

If the world is to hear the church’s voice today, leaders are needed who are authoritative, spiritual, and sacrificial.

**Page 19 · Location 234**

True leaders must be willing to suffer for the sake of objectives great enough to demand their wholehearted obedience.

**Page 19 · Location 235**

Spiritual leaders are not elected, appointed, or created by synods or churchly assemblies. God alone makes them.

**3. The Master’s Master Principle**

**Page 21 · Location 258**

The Master's Master Principle

**Page 21 · Location 259**

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. MARK 10: 43–44

**Page 24 · Location 302**

Serving and suffering are paired in the teaching and life of our Lord.

**Page 26 · Location 335**

God's ideal Servant is optimistic until every part of God's work is done.

**4. Natural and Spiritual Leadership****Page 29 · Location 348**

Natural and Spiritual Leadership

**Page 29 · Location 351**

Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead.

**Page 30 · Location 358**

"There are only three kinds of people—those who are immovable, those who are movable, and those who move them!" Leaders move others.

**Page 30 · Location 364**

Spiritual leadership blends natural and spiritual qualities.

**Page 30 · Location 371**

Spiritual leadership requires superior spiritual power . . .

**Page 31 · Location 380**

Are leaders born or made? Surely, both.

**Page 31 · Location 382**

Leaders are made by opportunity and timing.

**Page 32 · Location 396**

A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position by the inward leading of the Holy Spirit and the press of circumstances....

**Page 33 · Location 408**

God, this is my task, God help me.

**Page 35 · Location 437**

Spiritual goals can be achieved only by spiritual people who use spiritual methods.

## **5. Can You Become a Leader?**

**Page 37 · Location 448**

Can You Become a Leader?

**Page 38 · Location 459**

Natural leadership qualities are important. Too often these skills lie dormant and undiscovered.

**Page 38 · Location 462**

How do you identify and deal with bad habits? To lead others, you must master your appetites. • How well do you maintain self-control when things go wrong? The leader who loses control under adversity forfeits respect and influence. A leader must be calm in crisis and resilient in disappointment. • To what degree do you think independently? A leader must use the best ideas of others to make decisions. A leader cannot wait for others to make up his or her mind. • How well can you handle criticism? When have you profited from it? The humble person can learn from petty criticism, even malicious criticism. • Can you turn disappointment into creative new opportunity? What three actions could you take facing any disappointment?

**Page 38 · Location 469**

Do you readily gain the cooperation of others and win their respect and confidence? Genuine leadership doesn't have to manipulate or pressure others. • Can you exert discipline without making a power play? Are your

corrections or rebukes clear without being destructive? True leadership is an internal quality of the spirit and needs no show of external force. • In what situations have you been a peacemaker? A leader must be able to reconcile with opponents and make peace where arguments have created hostility. • Do people trust you with difficult and delicate matters? Your answer should include examples. • Can you induce people to do happily some legitimate thing that they would not normally wish to do? Leaders know how to make others feel valued.

**Page 39 · Location 477**

Can you accept opposition to your viewpoint or decision without taking offense? Leaders always face opposition. • Can you make and keep friends? Your circle of loyal friends is an index of your leadership potential. • Do you depend on the praise of others to keep you going? Can you hold steady in the face of disapproval and even temporary loss of confidence? • Are you at ease in the presence of strangers? Do you get nervous in the office of your superior? A leader knows how to exercise and accept authority. • Are people who report to you generally at ease? A leader should be sympathetic and friendly. • Are you interested in people? All types? All races? No prejudice? • Are you tactful? Can you anticipate how your words will affect a person? Genuine leaders think before speaking. • Is your will strong and steady? Leaders cannot vacillate, cannot drift with the wind. Leaders know there's a difference between conviction and stubbornness. • Can you forgive? Or do you nurse resentments and harbor ill-feelings toward those who have injured you? • Are you reasonably optimistic? Pessimism and leadership do not mix. Leaders are positively visionary. • Have you identified a master passion such as that of Paul, who said, "This one thing I do!" Such singleness of motive will focus your energies and powers on the desired objective. Leaders need a strong focus. • How do you respond to new responsibility? How we handle relationships tells a lot about our potential for leadership. R. E. Thompson

suggests these tests: • Do other people's failures annoy or challenge you? • Do you "use" people, or cultivate people? • Do you direct people, or develop people? • Do you criticize or encourage? • Do you shun or seek the person with a special need or problem? 1

**Page 41 · Location 510**

If you cannot keep a secret, do not try to lead.

## **6. Insights on Leadership from Paul**

**Page 43 · Location 518**

Insights on Leadership from Paul

**Page 45 · Location 547**

With respect to relationships within the church, the leader is to be above reproach.

**Page 45 · Location 548**

If a charge is preferred against him, it fails because his life affords no grounds for reproach or indictment of wrongdoing.

**Page 45 · Location 549**

With respect to relationships outside the church, the spiritual leader is to enjoy a good reputation.

**Page 45 · Location 554**

When a Christian leader full of high ideals lives a holy and joyful life in front of unbelievers, they often want to cultivate a similar experience.

**Page 46 · Location 557**

Moral principles common to the Christian life are under constant, subtle attack, and none more so than sexual faithfulness.

**Page 46 · Location 558**

Faithfulness to one marriage partner is the biblical norm. The spiritual leader should be a man of unchallengeable morality.

**Page 46 · Location 562**

A leader must be prudent, a person with sound judgment. This principle describes “the well-balanced state of mind resulting from habitual self-restraint”—the inner character that comes from daily self-discipline.

**Page 47 · Location 568**

A well-ordered life is the fruit of a well-ordered mind.

**Page 47 · Location 578**

An eminent preacher declared that he knew of no sermons that gave greater evidence of an intimate knowledge of **classical and general literature** than those of Wesley.

**Page 48 · Location 593**

Covetousness and its twin, the love of money, disqualify a person for leadership.

**Page 49 · Location 601**

The Christian leader who is married must demonstrate the ability to “manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect”

**Page 49 · Location 605**

A spouse must fully share the leader’s spiritual aspirations and be willing to join in the necessary sacrifices.

**Page 50 · Location 609**

While a leader cares for church and mission, he must not neglect the family.

**Page 50 · Location 610**

A person’s ability to lead at home is a strong indicator of his readiness to lead in ministry.

## **7. Insights on Leadership from Peter**

**Page 53 · Location 647**

Insights on Leadership from Peter

**Page 54 · Location 666**

The spiritual leader is to approach the work willingly, not by coercion.

**Page 55 · Location 683**

The Christian leader must not be dictatorial. “Not lording it over those entrusted to you” (1 Peter 5: 3).

## **8. Essential Qualities of Leadership**

### **Page 59 · Location 713**

Essential Qualities of Leadership

### **Page 59 · Location 720**

Jesus trained His disciples superbly for their future roles. He taught by example and by precept; His teaching was done “on the road.”

### **Page 61 · Location 737**

DISCIPLINE Without this essential quality, all other gifts remain as dwarfs: they cannot grow. So discipline appears first on our list.

### **Page 61 · Location 739**

Before we can conquer the world, we must first conquer the self.

### **Page 61 · Location 740**

Those who rebel against authority and scorn self-discipline—who shirk the rigors and turn from the sacrifices—do not qualify to lead.

### **Page 61 · Location 742**

Lazy and disorganized people never rise to true leadership.

### **Page 61 · Location 750**

The young man of leadership caliber will work while others waste time, study while others snooze, pray while others daydream. Slothful habits are overcome, whether in thought, deed, or dress.

### **Page 63 · Location 778**

Throughout his life, George Whitefield rose at four in the morning and retired each night at ten.

### **Page 64 · Location 788**

If a leader shows strong discipline, others will see it and cooperate with the expectations placed on them.

### **Page 65 · Location 797**

VISION Those who have most powerfully and permanently influenced their generation have been “seers”—people who have seen more and farther than others—persons of faith, for faith is vision.

**Page 70 · Location 884**

COURAGE: Leaders require courage of the highest order—always moral courage and often physical courage as well.

**Page 71 · Location 886**

Courage is that quality of mind that enables people to encounter danger or difficulty firmly, without fear or discouragement.

**Page 72 · Location 907**

Courage follows through with a task until it is done.

## **9. More Essential Qualities of Leadership**

**Page 77 · Location 952**

More Essential Qualities of Leadership

**Page 77 · Location 956**

Our sense of humor is a gift from God that should be controlled as well as cultivated. Clean, wholesome humor will relax tension and relieve difficult situations.

**Page 78 · Location 968**

Humor is a great asset and an invaluable lubricant in missionary life.

**Page 82 · Location 1029**

The person who is impatient with weakness will be ineffective in his leadership.

**Page 83 · Location 1039**

FRIENDSHIP: You can measure leaders by the number and quality of their friends.

**Page 85 · Location 1066**

Leaders need to be able to reconcile opposing viewpoints without giving offense or compromising principle.

**Page 86 · Location 1076**

INSPIRATIONAL POWER: The power of inspiring others to service and sacrifice will mark God's leader.

**Page 87 · Location 1092**

However spiritual a leader may be, he cannot translate vision into action without executive ability.

**Page 87 · Location 1095**

God is methodic and orderly.

**Page 88 · Location 1105**

To get at the root of problems, a leader must develop into a skillful listener.

**Page 88 · Location 1110**

Leaders who want to show sensitivity should listen often and long, and talk short and seldom.

**10. Above All Else****Page 91 · Location 1136**

Above All Else

**Page 91 · Location 1139**

Spiritual leadership requires Spirit-filled people. Other qualities are important; to be Spirit-filled is indispensable.

**Page 93 · Location 1161**

The book of Acts clearly demonstrates that leaders who significantly influenced the Christian movement were Spirit-filled.

**Page 93 · Location 1168**

These early leaders of the church were sensitive to the leading of the Spirit. Because they had surrendered their own wills to the Spirit's control, they were delighted to obey His promptings and guidance.

**Page 94 · Location 1174**

The Spirit intervened to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. The Spirit's great purpose is missions. Should that not be ours too?

**Page 95 · Location 1184**

To be filled with the Spirit means simply that the Christian voluntarily surrenders life and will to the Spirit.

**Page 95 · Location 1188**

To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. The Christian leader's mind, emotions, will, and physical strength all become available for the Spirit to guide and use.

**Page 95 · Location 1200**

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Christians everywhere have undiscovered and unused spiritual gifts. The leader must help bring those gifts into the service of the kingdom, to develop them, to marshal their power. Spirituality alone does not make a leader; natural gifts and those given by God must be there too.

**Page 96 · Location 1208**

The coming of spiritual gifts in the life of the Christian does not eliminate natural gifts but enhances and stimulates them.

## **11. Prayer and Leadership**

**Page 99 · Location 1217**

Prayer and Leadership

**Page 99 · Location 1220**

The spiritual leader should outpace the rest of the church, above all, in prayer.

**Page 100 · Location 1236**

Mastering the art of prayer, like anything else, takes time.

**Page 103 · Location 1275**

All Christians need more teaching in the art of prayer, and the Holy Spirit is the master teacher.

**Page 104 · Location 1286**

The Spirit delights to help us pray.

**Page 108 · Location 1340**

Prayer moves the arm That moves the world to bring deliverance down.

(Author Unknown)

**Page 108 · Location 1349**

Great leaders of the Bible were great at prayer. “They were not leaders because of brilliancy of thought, because they were exhaustless in resources, because of their magnificent culture or native endowment, but because, by the power of prayer, they could command the power of God.”

## **12. The Leader and Time**

**Page 111 · Location 1358**

The Leader and Time

**Page 111 · Location 1360**

The quality of a person’s leadership will be in part measured by time: its use and its passage. The character and career of a young person depends on how he or she spends spare time.

**Page 112 · Location 1372**

A leader will seldom say, “I don’t have the time.” Such an excuse is usually the refuge of a small-minded and inefficient person.

## **13. The Leader and Reading**

**Page 121 · Location 1475**

The Leader and Reading

**Page 121 · Location 1481**

A student to the end, Paul wanted to spend time in study.

**Page 122 · Location 1489**

The leader who intends to grow spiritually and intellectually will be reading constantly.

**Page 122 · Location 1494**

John Wesley had a passion for reading, and he did so mostly on horseback.

**Page 122 · Location 1497**

Wesley told the younger ministers of the Methodist societies to read or get out of the ministry!

**Page 124 · Location 1513**

The spiritual leader should choose books for their spiritual benefit.

**Page 124 · Location 1520**

The leader should read to have fellowship with great minds. Through books we hold communion with the greatest spiritual leaders of the ages.

**Page 125 · Location 1525**

If a man is known by the company he keeps, so also his character is reflected in the books he reads.

**Page 127 · Location 1561**

By reading we learn. By meditating on the themes of our reading, we pluck the fruit from the tree of books and add nourishment to our minds and our ministries.

## **14. Improving Leadership**

**Page 131 · Location 1603**

Improving Leadership

**Page 131 · Location 1605**

Every Christian is obliged to be the best for God.

**Page 131 · Location 1607**

Not every Christian is called to major leadership in the church, but every Christian is a leader, for we all influence others.

**Page 132 · Location 1614**

Enthusiastic leaders generate enthusiastic followers.

## **15. The Cost of Leadership**

**Page 139 · Location 1686**

The Cost of Leadership

**Page 139 · Location 1689**

To aspire to leadership in God's kingdom requires us to be willing to pay a price higher than others are willing to pay. The toll of true leadership is heavy, and the more effective the leadership, the greater the cost.

**Page 142 · Location 1743**

Because the leader must always be ahead of his followers, he lives with a particular loneliness.

**Page 145 · Location 1778**

No leader lives a day without criticism, and humility will never be more on trial than when criticism comes.

## **16. Responsibilities of Leadership**

**Page 151 · Location 1836**

Responsibilities of Leadership

**Page 151 · Location 1844**

The Son of God became the servant of God in order to do the mission of God.

**Page 152 · Location 1846**

The true leader is concerned primarily with the welfare of others, not with his own comfort or prestige.

**Page 153 · Location 1859**

Leaders preserve the standards through loving discipline.

**Page 153 · Location 1864**

The spirit of meekness will achieve far more than the spirit of criticism.

**Page 154 · Location 1881**

A leader must initiate.

**Page 154 · Location 1884**

The leader must either initiate plans for progress or recognize the worthy plans of others. He must remain in front, giving guidance and direction to those behind. He does not wait for things to happen but makes them happen. He is a self-starter, always on the lookout for improved methods, eager to test new ideas.

**Page 155 · Location 1888**

The greatest achievements in the history of missions have come from leaders close to God who took courageous, calculated risks.

**Page 155 · Location 1889**

More failure comes from an excess of caution than from bold experiments with new ideas.

**17. Tests of Leadership****Page 159 · Location 1923**

Tests of Leadership

**Page 159 · Location 1929**

Tests are meant to let us succeed, not fail. Tests display progress.

**Page 159 · Location 1931**

Lowering standards is always a backward step, and compromise nearly always requires it.

**Page 161 · Location 1954**

Our own day presents leaders with difficult problems as never before. If leaders are to survive, they must view the difficult as commonplace, the complex as normal.

**Page 162 · Location 1964**

Hudson Taylor faced many hard situations in his career to win China for Christ. He counted three phases in most great tasks undertaken for God—impossible, difficult, done.

**Page 163 · Location 1982**

How a leader handles failure (or simply feelings of failure) will set much of the agenda for the

**Page 163 · Location 1983**

future.

**Page 163 · Location 1991**

Successful leaders have learned that no failure is final, whether his own failure or someone else's.

**Page 164 · Location 1994**

Most leaders at some time face the problem of a jealous rival. Even Moses encountered that test. Jealousy is a common weapon of the devil.

## **18. The Art of Delegation**

**Page 167 · Location 2020**

The Art of Delegation

**Page 167 · Location 2023**

One facet of leadership is the ability to recognize the special abilities and limitations of others, combined with the capacity to fit each one into the job where he or she will do best. To succeed in getting things done through others is the highest type of leadership.

**Page 167 · Location 2025**

Dwight L. Moody, a shrewd judge of people, once said that he would rather put a thousand men to work than do the work of a thousand men.

**Page 168 · Location 2042**

Once a leader delegates, he should show utmost confidence in the people he has entrusted.

**Page 169 · Location 2044**

Subordinates perform better when they feel sure of the leader's support, whether a given project succeeds or fails, so long as they have acted within the bounds of their assignment.

**Page 169 · Location 2046**

This confidence comes when responsibilities have been clearly defined in writing, to eliminate any misunderstandings. Failing to communicate clearly has led to many unhappy problems and unsatisfying outcomes.

**Page 171 · Location 2072**

It is a big mistake to assume more duties than we can discharge. There is no virtue in doing more than our fair share of the work.

## **19. Replacing Leaders**

**Page 173 · Location 2093**

Replacing Leaders

**Page 173 · Location 2096**

The ultimate test of a person's leadership is the health of the organization when the organizer is gone.

**Page 174 · Location 2108**

No man, however gifted and devoted, is indispensable to the work of the kingdom.

## **20. Reproducing Leaders**

**Page 179 · Location 2159**

Reproducing Leaders

**Page 179 · Location 2162**

With the words above Paul presses home a leader's responsibility to train others to lead.

**Page 180 · Location 2182**

Our Lord devoted the greater part of His three years of ministry to molding the characters and spirits of His disciples.

**Page 182 · Location 2203**

He claimed that if he failed to train others to do his work better than he did it, he had failed.

**Page 183 · Location 2221**

Leadership training cannot be done on a mass scale. It requires patient, careful instruction and prayerful, personal guidance over a considerable time.

## **21. Perils of Leadership**

**Page 187 · Location 2247**

Perils of Leadership

**Page 187 · Location 2255**

Nothing aggravates God more than conceit, the sin that aims at setting the self upon a throne, making of God a secondary figure.

**Page 188 · Location 2256**

Pride takes many forms, but spiritual pride is the most grievous.

**Page 195 · Location 2353**

Every preacher ought to be primarily a prophet of God who preaches as God bids him, without regard to results.

## **22. The Leader Nehemiah**

**Page 199 · Location 2389**

The Leader Nehemiah

**Page 199 · Location 2392**

Nehemiah is one of the most inspiring leaders in the Bible.

**Page 199 · Location 2393**

An analysis of his personality and methods discloses that the methods he adopted were effective only because of the quality of his character.

**Page 199 · Location 2396**

Nehemiah was a man of prayer.

**Page 199 · Location 2398**

He showed courage in the face of danger.

**Page 200 · Location 2400**

His genuine concern for the welfare of others was so obvious that even his enemies noticed.

**Page 200 · Location 2403**

Nehemiah exhibited keen foresight.

**Page 200 · Location 2406**

Through all his adventures and boldness, there runs a strain of caution. He did not jump into the work immediately upon arrival but waited three days to appraise the situation

**Page 200 · Location 2408**

Nehemiah could make clear decisions.

**Page 200 · Location 2410**

Nehemiah was uncommonly empathetic. He listened to grievances and took remedial action

**Page 201 · Location 2413**

He accepted responsibility with the intention of following through on all assignments, the pleasant ones and the dirty ones, until the job was done.

**Page 201 · Location 2415**

Nehemiah was a vigorous administrator,

**Page 201 · Location 2417**

Nehemiah raised the morale of his colleagues,

**Page 201 · Location 2418**

He built up their faith by redirecting focus away from “the impossible” toward the greatness of God.

**Page 201 · Location 2422**

Nehemiah encouraged others generously.

**Page 202 · Location 2427**

Nehemiah promptly faced potential weaknesses in the plan.

**Page 202 · Location 2435**

Nehemiah listened to their stories and sympathized with their suffering.

**Page 202 · Location 2437**

Nehemiah recovered the authority of the Word of God in the lives of the people

**Page 203 · Location 2443**

Nehemiah could organize projects and people.

**Page 203 · Location 2446**

Nehemiah faced up to opposition without forcing a violent confrontation.

**Page 203 · Location 2450**

The test of spiritual leadership is the achievement of its objective.

**A Final Word****Page 205 · Location 2456**

A Final Word

**Page 205 · Location 2460**

. . . there's a lot involved in leadership, there's even more involved in spiritual leadership.

**Page 206 · Location 2470**

Through all the highs and lows of leadership, in times of great certainty and crippling uncertainty, those who have led in rebuilding broken-down walls and bringing God's message of light and life into dark places have been those whose souls have never ceased to say "Yes" to Jesus' invitation, "Follow Me."